

EMANCIPATION!

ITS POLICY AND NECESSITY AS A WAR MEASURE FOR
THE SUPPRESSION OF THE REBELLION.

SPEECH OF HON. CHARLES SUMNER,

AT FANEUIL HALL, OCT. 6, 1862.

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF MASSACHUSETTS:—

Meetings of the people in ancient Athens were opened with these words:—"May the Gods doom to perdition that man and all his race, who, on this occasion, shall speak, act, or contrive anything against the Commonwealth." With such an imprecation all were summoned to the duties of the citizen. But duties became urgent in proportion to perils. If ever there was occasion for these solemn words it is now, when the country is in danger,—when the national capital itself is menaced,—when all along the loyal border, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian territories west of the Mississippi, barbarian hordes, under some Alaric of the South, are marshalling their forces, and when death is knocking at the doors of so many happy homes. If ever there was occasion when country might claim the best and most self-forgetful effort of all, it is now. Each in his way must act. Each must do what he can; the youthful and strong by giving themselves to the service; the weak, if in no other way, by scraping lint. Such is the call of patriotism. This country must be saved.

GOOD MEN AND GERMANS AND IRISH FOR THE WAR.

Among the omens which I hail with gladness is the union which now happily prevails among good men in support alike of the State and National Governments,—forgetting that they were Democrats, forgetting that they were Whigs, and disregarding old party names, to remember

only the duties of the citizen. Another sign, not less cheering, is to be found in the generous devotion which all among us of foreign birth have offered to their adopted country. Germans fight as for their fatherland, and Irishmen fight as for Ireland; nor can our cause be less dear to the latter, now that the spirit of Grattan and O'Connell has entered into it.

“NO PARTY.”

Surely, this is no time for the strife of party. Its jealousies and antipathies are now more than ever irrational. Its clamors of opposition are now more than ever unpatriotic. Unhappily, there are some to whom its bitter, unforgiving temper has become so controlling, that, even at this moment, they would rather enlist to put down a political enemy than to put down the rebel enemy of their country; they would rather hang Henry Wilson or John A. Andrew than hang Jefferson Davis or Robert Toombs. Such persons, with all their sweltered venom, are to be found here in Massachusetts. Assuming the badge of “no party,” they are ready for any party, new or old, by which their prejudices may be gratified, thus verifying the pungent words of Col. Benton:—“Wherever you will show me a man with the word ‘no party’ in his mouth, I will show you a man that figures at the head or dangles at the tail of the most inveterate party that ever existed.” Of course, such persons cannot be expected to take part in a meeting like the present, which seeks to unite rather than to divide, while it rallies all to the support of the President, and of that policy of freedom which he has proclaimed.

PROCLAMATION OF THE PRESIDENT.

Thank God, that I live to enjoy this day! Thank God, that my eyes have not closed without seeing this great salvation. The skies are brighter and the air is purer, now that slavery has been handed over to judgment.

By the proclamation of the President, all persons held as slaves January 1st, 1863, within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons or any of them in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom. But beyond these most effective words, which do not go into operation before the new year, there are other words of immediate operation, constituting a present edict of emancipation. The President recites the recent acts of Congress applicable to this question, and calls upon all persons in the military or naval service to observe, obey, and enforce them. But these acts provide that all slaves of rebels, taking

refuge within the lines of our army, all slaves captured from rebels or deserted by them, and all slaves found within any place occupied by rebel forces and afterwards occupied by the forces of the United States, shall be forever free of servitude, and not again held as slaves; and these acts further provide, that no person in the military or naval service shall, under any pretence whatever, assume to decide on the validity of any claim to a slave, or to surrender any such person to his claimant, on pain of being dismissed from the service: so that by these acts, now proclaimed by the President, freedom is practically secured to all who can find shelter within our lines, and the glorious flag of the Union, wherever it floats, becomes the flag of Freedom.

STAND BY THE PRESIDENT.

Thank God for what has been already done, and let us all take heart as we go forward to uphold this great edict. For myself I accept the Proclamation without note or comment. It is enough for me, that in the exercise of the war power it strikes at the origin and mainspring of this rebellion; for I have never concealed the conviction that it mattered little where we struck slavery, provided only that we struck sincerely and in earnest. So is it all connected, that the whole must suffer with every part, and the words of the poet will be verified, that "whatever link you strike, tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike."

PERSONAL — CHALLENGES SCRUTINY.

On this most interesting occasion, so proper for gratitude, it is difficult to see anything but the cause; and yet, appearing before you on the invitation of a Committee of the Commonwealth, I must not forget that I owe this privilege to my public character as a Senator of Massachusetts. It is in this character that I have been often invited before; but now the invitation has more than its accustomed significance, for, at the close of a long period of public service, it brings me face to face with my constituents. In a different condition of the country, I could not decline the opportunity which is afforded of reviewing the relations between us; of showing at least how you took me from private station, all untried, and gave me one of your highest trusts, and how this trust was enhanced by the generosity with which you sustained me against obloquy and vindictive assault, especially by your unparalleled indulgence to me throughout a protracted disability; and, perhaps, might I be so bold, of presenting for your consideration some sketch of what I have attempted, conscious that, if not always successful, I have been at all times faithful to my convictions, and faithful also to your interests, sparing nothing of time or effort, and making up by industry for any lack of ability, so that, during a service of more than eleven years, I have never once visited home while Congress was in session,

or been absent for a single day, unless when compelled by illness; and during the session which has just closed, filled with most laborious duties, I was not out of my seat, from beginning to end, for a single hour. But this is not the time for such a review. I have no heart for it, while my country is in danger. And yet, I shall not lose the occasion to challenge the scrutiny of all, even here in this commercial metropolis, where the interests of business are sometimes placed above all other interests. Frankly and fearlessly I make my appeal. In all simplicity I ask you to consider what I have done, as your servant, whether in the Senate or out of the Senate, in matters of legislation or in matters of business. If there is any one disposed to criticise or complain, let him be heard. Let the whole record of my public acts be opened, and let any of the numerous persons who have come to me on business testify. I know too well the strength of my case to shrink from any inquiry, even though stimulated by the animosity of political warfare.

DEFENDS HIMSELF AGAINST TWO ACCUSATIONS.

But there are two accusations, often repeated, to which I reply on the spot, and I do so with less hesitation because the topics are germane to this occasion. The first is, that from my place in the Senate I early proclaimed Slavery to be Barbarism. Never shall the cause of freedom go by default, if I can help it; and I rejoice that, on that occasion, in presence of the slave-holding conspirators, vaunting the ennobling character of slavery, I used no soft words. It is true that, in direct reply to most offensive assumptions, I proclaimed slavery barbarous in origin; barbarous in law; barbarous in all its pretensions; barbarous in the instruments it employs; barbarous in consequences; barbarous in spirit; barbarous wherever it shows itself, while it breeds barbarians, and develops everywhere, alike in the individual and in the society to which he belongs, the essential elements of barbarism. It is true that on the same occasion I portrayed slavery as founded in violence and sustained only by violence, and declared that such a wrong must, by a sure law of compensation, blast the master as well as the slave; blast the land on which they live; blast the community of which they are a part; blast the government which does not forbid the outrage; and the longer it exists, and the more completely it prevails, must its blasting influence penetrate the whole social system. And was I not right? Since then the testimony has been overwhelming. A committee of the Senate has made a report, which has been extensively circulated, on the barbarities of this rebellion. You know the whole story to which each day testifies. It is in some single incident that you may see the low-water mark of social life; and I know nothing in which the barbarism of slavery is more completely exhibited than in the fate of our brave soldiers, dug up

from honorable graves, where at last they had found rest, that their bones might be carved into keepsakes and their skulls into drinking-cups to gratify the malignant hate of slave-masters.

The other accusation is similar in character. It is said that I have too often introduced the Slavery Question. At this moment, seeing what slavery has done, I doubt if you will not rather say that I have introduced it too seldom. If on this account I had neglected any single interest of my constituents; if I had been less strenuous whenever the foreign relations, or manufactures, or commerce, or finances of the country were involved; if I had failed to take my part in all that concerns the people of Massachusetts, and in all that is embraced within the manifold duties of a Senator; then, indeed, I might be open to condemnation. But you will not regret that your representative, who has been faithful in all other things, has been always constant and earnest against slavery, and that he announced from the beginning the magnitude of the question, and our duties with regard to it. Say what you will, the slave is the humblest and grandest figure of our times. What humility! What grandeur! both alike illimitable. In his presence all other questions are so petty that for a public man to be wrong with regard to him is to be wholly wrong. How then did I err? The cause would have justified a better pertinacity than I can boast. In the Senate of Rome, the elder Cato, convinced that peace was possible only by the destruction of Carthage, concluded all his speeches, on every matter of debate, by the well-known words, "But whatever you may think of the question under consideration, this I know, Carthage must be destroyed." I have never read that the veteran senator was condemned for patriotic ardor. With stronger reason far I too might have cried always, "This I know, slavery must be destroyed" — *Delenda est servitudo*. But while seeking to limit and constrain slavery, I have never proposed anything except in strictest conformity with the Constitution, for I have always recognized the Constitution as my guide, which I was bound in all respects to follow.

Such are the accusations to which I now thus briefly reply. Now that we are all united in the policy of emancipation, they become of little consequence; for even if I were once alone I am no longer so. I place myself, with the loyal multitudes of the North, firmly and sincerely by the side of the President, where, indeed, I have ever been.

QUOTES BURKE.

If you will bear with me yet longer in allusions which I make with reluctance, I shall quote as my unanswerable defence the words of Edmund Burke when addressing his constituents at Bristol:—

"And now, gentlemen, on this serious day, when I come, as it were, to make up my account with you, let me take to myself some degree of hon-

est pride on the nature of the charges that are against me. I do not stand here accused of venality or of neglect of duty. It is not said, that, in the long period of my service, I have in a single instance sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition or to my fortune. It is not alleged, that to gratify any anger or revenge of my own or my party I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any description of men, or any one man in any description. No! the charges against me are all of one kind, that I have pushed the principles of general justice and benevolence too far; farther than a cautious policy would warrant; and farther than the opinions of many would go along with me. In every accident which may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression and distress I will call to mind this accusation, and be comforted."

Among the passages in eloquence which can never die, I know none more beautiful or heroic. If I invoke its protection, it is with the consciousness that, however unlike its author in genius and fame, I am not unlike in the accusations to which I am exposed.

PROGRESS DURING THIS YEAR.

Fellow Citizens: A year has passed since I addressed you; but during this time what events for warning and encouragement. Amidst vicissitudes of war, the cause of Human Freedom has steadily and grandly advanced; not, perhaps, as you could desire, yet it is the only cause which has not failed. Slavery and the black laws all abolished in the national capital; slavery interdicted in all the national territory; Hayti and Liberia recognized as independent republics in the family of nations; the slave-trade placed under the ban of a new treaty with Great Britain; all persons in the military and naval service prohibited from returning slaves, or sitting in judgment on the claim of a master; the slaves of rebels emancipated by coming within our lines; a tender of compensation for the abolition of slaves,—such are some of the triumphs of freedom in the recent Congress. Amidst the doubts and uncertainties of the present hour, let us think of these things and be comforted. I cannot forget that when I last spoke to you, I urged the liberation of the slaves of rebels, and especially that our officers should not be permitted to surrender to slavery any human being who sought shelter within our lines, and I further suggested, if need be, a bridge of gold for the retreating fiend. And now all that I then proposed is embodied in the legislation of the country, as the supreme law of the land.

MILITARY NECESSITY.

It was simply as a *military necessity* that I urged these measures; it is as a military necessity that I now uphold them, and insist upon their completest and most generous execution, so that they shall have the largest scope and efficacy. Not as an abolitionist, not as an anti-slavery man, not even as a philanthropist, if I may claim that honored name, do I now speak. I

forget, for the moment, all the unutterable wrong of slavery, and all the transcendent blessings of freedom; for they do not belong to this argument. I think only of my country, menaced by rebellion, and ask how it shall be saved. But I have no policy, no theory, no resolutions to support; nothing which I will not gladly abandon if you will show me anything better;

If you know better rules than these, be free,
Impart them; but if not, use these with me.

OBJECT OF THE WAR.

And now what is the object of the war? This question is often asked, and the answer is not always candid. It is sometimes said that it is to abolish slavery; here is a mistake or a misrepresentation. It is sometimes said, in flash language, that the object is "the Constitution as it is," and "the Union as it was." Here is another mistake or misrepresentation, which is more offensive, when it is known that by "the Constitution as it is" is meant simply the right to hold and hunt slaves; and by "the Union as it was" is meant those halcyon days of pro-slavery democracy, when the ballot-box was destroyed in Kansas, when freedom of debate was menaced in the Senate, and when chains were put upon the Boston Court House. Not for any of these things is this war waged. Not to abolish slavery, or to establish slavery, but simply to put down the rebellion. But this question occurs: How can this object be best accomplished?

In discussing this question with proper frankness, I shall develop and vindicate that policy of which the President's Proclamation is the herald, and to which his administration is publicly pledged. The administration belongs to us, and we belong to the administration. My aim will be to bring the administration and the people nearer together, by showing the ground on which they must meet, for the sake of the republic, and that it may not perish beneath felon blows.

WAR MUST BE ENDED,—PEACE, PEACE, PEACE.

I start, of course, with the assumption, in which you will all unite, that this war must be brought to a close. It must not be allowed to drag its slow length along, bloody, and fruitless, except with death. Lives enough have been sacrificed; graves enough have been filled; homes enough have been emptied; patriot soldiers enough have been sent back halt and maimed, with one leg or one arm; crutches enough have been made. Nor is this all; treasure enough has been expended. It is common to think only of the national debt, which is now swelling to unnatural proportions; but this will be small by the side of the fearful sum total of loss from the destruction of property, the derangement of business, and

change of productive to unproductive industry. Even if we do not accept the conclusions of an ingenious calculator, who places this damage at ten thousand millions of dollars, we must confess that it is an immensity, which, like the numbers representing sidereal spaces, the imagination refuses to grasp. To stop this infinity of waste there must be peace; to stop this cruel slaughter there must be peace. In the old wars between king and parliament, which rent England, the generous Falkland cried from his soul, *Peace, peace, peace*, and history has gratefully recorded his words. Never did he utter this cry with more earnestness than I do now. But how shall this blessing be secured?

NO SEPARATION OF THE STATES.

I start, also, with the further assumption that there can be no separation of these States. Foreign nations may predict what rebels threaten; but this result is now impossible. Pray, good sirs, where will you run the boundary line? Shall it be the cotton line? Shall it embrace Virginia in whole or part? How about Tennessee? Kentucky? Or shall it be the most natural line of cleavage, the slave line. And how will you adjust the navigation of the Mississippi, and the whole question of slavery? And what principles, commercial and political, shall be established between the two governments? But do not deceive yourselves into the idea that peace founded on separation can be anything but a delusion and a snare. Separation is interminable war, — “still beginning, never ending,” — worse than the forays which ravaged the Scottish border, or the Tartar invasions which harassed China, until its famous wall was built fifteen hundred miles long, and so thick that six horsemen can ride upon it abreast. War will be chronic, and we must all sleep on our arms. Better that it should be all at once rather than that it should be diffused over a generation. If blood must be shed, better for a year than for an age.

But if there be anything in the Monroe doctrine, if we could not accommodate ourselves to the foothold of Europe on this continent, how can we recognize on our borders a malignant slave empire, with slavery as its boasted corner-stone, constituting what Shakspeare calls an “impudent nation,” embittered and enraged against us, without law, without humanity, and without morals, — a mighty Blue Beard’s Chamber, — an enormous House of Ill Fame? Surely we would not allow the old Kingdom of the Assassins to be revived at our side. But our rebels are as bad.

SEPARATION IS CHAOS.

Nor can you recognize such a separation without delivering over this cherished Union to chaos. If the rebel States are allowed to go, who can be retained? It is true, that there can be no constitutional right to break up the Constitution; but the precedent which we shall unhappily recognize

will unsettle this whole fabric of States. Therefore, fellow-citizens, there can be no separation. But how to prevent it, in other words, how to hamstring the rebellion, and conquer a peace, — this is the question.

REBELS MUST BE SUBDUED, THEN CONCILIATED.

The rebels are in arms, aroused, at home, on their own soil, and resolved not to yield. Nothing less than independence will satisfy them; if the war continues, I know not that they will be content with this. Two policies are presented on our side,—one a policy which looks primarily to rebel conciliation, and the other a policy which looks primarily to rebel submission. And yet both of these have the same elements, although in inverse order. The first begins with conciliation in order to end with submission; which is the cart before the horse. The second begins with submission in order to end with conciliation. The question between them is whether conciliation shall precede or follow submission. Conciliation is always proper where it is possible; but it is now obviously impossible. If anybody believes, at this stage, that any words or acts of conciliation; any forbearance on our part; any hesitation in the exercise of the sternest rights of war, will help us to victory or contribute to put down the rebellion, let me not enter into that man's counsels, for they can end in nothing but shame and disaster. I find that they who talk most against the coercion of rebels, and the coercion of States, are indifferent to the coercion of four millions of people, men, women, and children, to work without wages under the discipline of the lash. Without hesitation I say, that the rebels are to be subdued, call it coercion or subjugation, which you will; and our war has this direct object. With victory will come conciliation, clemency, amnesty. But first victory.

To obtain victory, two things are needed: first, a precise comprehension of the case, and, secondly, vigor of conduct. One will not do without the other. It will not be enough to comprehend the case unless you are ready to treat it with corresponding vigor. And it will not be enough to have vigor unless you discern clearly how the case shall be treated. To this end there must be statesmen as well as generals.

DIAGNOSIS OF THE CASE.

The first duty of the good physician is to understand the condition of his patient; whether it is a case of medicine or surgery; of cutaneous eruption or deep-seated cancer. This is called the diagnosis. But the statesman, in all the troubles of his country, has the same preliminary duty. He, too, must see whether it is a case for medicine or surgery, of cutaneous eruption or deep-seated cancer. And all that he does must be precisely according to his judgment of the case. Of course, if the diagnosis fails, the whole treatment will be a failure.

ACTION, ACTION, ACTION.

Next to a comprehension of the case is vigor in conduct, which is more needful in proportion as the case becomes desperate. This must be not only in the field, but also in counsel; not only against the serried front of the enemy, but against those more fatal influences which come from the lack of comprehension or the lack of courage. The same vigor which we require in our generals must be required also in our statesmen; the same spirit must animate both. No folding of the hands; no putting off till to-morrow what can be done to-day; no hesitation; no timidity; but *action, action, action*, straight-forward, manly, God-like action. It is easy to see that this is required in the field; but it is no less required in every sphere of the government, from the President to the paymaster.

THUNDERBOLTS.

In war there are some who content themselves with triumphs of prudence instead of triumphs of courage, and spend much time in trying how not to be beaten, instead of how to beat. They are content to forego victory, if they can only escape defeat — forgetting that Fabius was only a defender, and not a conqueror; that a policy which may be fit at one time may be unfit at another; that a war waged in an enemy's country cannot be defensive, nor can it prevail by any procrastination. People at home on their own soil can afford to wait. Every month, every week, every day, is an ally. But we cannot wait. Not a moment can be spared. It was not in this way that those ancient commanders conducted to whom was given the title of the "two thunderbolts of war." It was not in this way that Napoleon defeated the Austrian forces at Maréngo, and shattered the Prussian power on the field of Jena.

But there are "thunderbolts" of the cabinet as well as of war. The elder Pitt, who was only a civilian, infused his own conquering soul into the British arms, making them irresistible; and the French Carnot, while in the cabinet, was said to have organized victory. Such is the statesmanship which is now needed for us. And there must be generals who will carry forward all that the most courageous statesmanship directs.

APPEAL FOR OUR SOLDIERS.

Armies and men we have of rarest quality. Better never entered a field or kept step to drum-beat. Intelligent and patriotic, they have left pleasant homes in order to offer themselves, if need be, for their country. They are no common hirelings, mere food for powder, but generous citizens, who have determined that their country shall be saved. Away in camp, or battle, or hospital, let them not be forgotten. But better than gratitude even, we owe them the protection which comes from good generals and cour-

ageous counsels. O God! let them not be led to useless slaughter like sheep, and let them not be compelled to take the hazard of death, from climate and exposure, as well as from ball and bayonet, without giving them at once all the allies which can be rallied to their support. In the name of humanity, and for the sake of victory, I make this appeal. But the loyal everywhere are allies to the soldier.

LOYALTY.

Does loyalty depend upon color? Is it the skin or the heart which is consulted? Do you ask the color of a benefactor? As I listen to people who higgie on the question how to treat Africans who are all ready to come to our rescue, I am reminded of that famous incident, where the Emperor of Austria, driven back by the Turks, 100,000 strong, and besieged in Vienna, which was at the point of surrender, was suddenly saved by the gallant Sobieski of Poland. The Emperor, big with imperial pride, thought chiefly of his own supereminent position,—as a pro-slavery Democrat thinks of his,—and hesitated how to receive the Polish monarch, who was only a king, when one of his counsellors said to him, “Sire, receive him as the saviour of your capitol.” But the Emperor hardly gave to his benefactor more than a cold salute; and we are now asked to imitate this stolid ingratitude.

THE AFRICAN RACE.

Wherever I turn in this war I find the African. If you ask for strategy, I know nothing better than that of the slave Robert Small, who brought the rebel steamer Planter with its armament out of Charleston, and surrendered it to our Commodore as prize of war. If you ask for successful courage, I know nothing better than that of the African Tillman, who rose upon a rebel prize crew, and, overcoming them, carried the ship into New York. If you ask for heroism, you will find it in that nameless African, on board the Pawnee, who, while passing shell from the magazine, lost both his legs by a ball, but still holding the shell, cries out, “Pass up the shell—never mind me; my time is up.” And if you ask for fidelity, you will find it in that slave, also without a name, who pointed out the road of safety to the harassed, retreating army of the Potomac. And if you ask for evidence of the desire for freedom, you will find it in the little slave girl, journeying north, whom Banks took on his cannon.

SLAVES MUST HELP.

Not now for the first time do I make this appeal. As early as May 28th of this year, I offered the following resolution in the Senate:

Resolved, That in the prosecution of the present war for the suppression of a wicked rebellion the time has come for the government of the United

States to appeal to the loyalty of the whole people everywhere, but especially in the rebel districts, and to invite all, without distinction of color or class, to make their loyalty manifest by ceasing to fight or labor for the rebels, and also by rendering every assistance in their power to the cause of the Constitution and the Union, according to their ability, whether by arms, or labor, or information, or in any other way; and since protection and allegiance are reciprocal duties dependent upon each other, it is the further duty of the government of the United States to maintain all such loyal people, without distinction of color or class, in their rights as *men*, according to the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

I do not stop to discuss this resolution. You know my opinions, and how I have pressed them in debate.

But you do not know that I have never failed to present them in that quarter where it was most important that they should prevail. On the 4th July, in a personal interview with the President, I said: "You need more men, not only at the North, but at the South, in the rear of the rebels; you need the slaves. Say the word, and you can give to our armies this invaluable alliance; you can change the rear-guard of the rebellion into the advance-guard of the Union. It is now 4th July. You can make this day more sacred, and more historic, and do for it better than the Continental Congress." Had that word been spoken at that time, I cannot doubt that the salvation of our country would have then begun.

Of course such a word would have been a blast from the war trumpet, justified as a military necessity, according to the examples of history and the heart of man. And such a blast the President has now blown.

HELP FROM SLAVES CONSTITUTIONAL.

But it is said that all appeal to the slaves is unconstitutional; and it is openly assumed that rebels who make war on the Constitution are not, like other public enemies, beyond its protection. But why this peculiar tenderness whenever slavery is in question? Battalions may be shot down, and property may be taken without due process of law, but slavery must not be touched. The ancient Egyptians, when conquered, submitted easily to the loss of life and property; but when a Roman soldier happened to kill a cat in the streets, they rose on him and tore him limb from limb, and the excitement was so violent that the generals overlooked the outrage for fear of insurrection. Slavery is our sacred cat, which cannot be touched without fear of insurrection. Sir, I am tired and disgusted at hearing the Constitution perpetually invoked for slavery. According to certain persons, the Constitution is all for slavery and nothing for freedom. I am happy to say that with me just the reverse is the case. There are people who keep apothecaries' scales in which they nicely weigh everything that is done for freedom. I have no such scales where freedom is in question, nor do I hesitate to say, that in a case of freedom all such nicety is unconstitutional.

The Constitution is not mean, stingy and pettifogging, but it is open-handed, liberal and just, inclining always in favor of freedom, and enabling the government in time of war not only to exercise any of the rights of war, including the liberation of slaves, but also to confer any largess or bounty, it may be of money, or, better still, of freedom, for services rendered. I do not dwell now on the unanswerable argument by which John Quincy Adams has placed this power beyond question. Whatever may be the provisions of the Constitution for the protection of the citizen, they are inapplicable to what is done against a public enemy. The law of an Italian city prohibited the letting of blood under penalty of death; but this was held not to apply to the surgeon who opened a vein to save the life of a citizen. In war there is no constitutional limit to the activity of the Executive, except the emergency. The safety of the people is the highest law. There is no blow which the President can strike, there is nothing he can do against the rebellion, which is not constitutional. Only inaction can be unconstitutional.

JUSTIFIED BY HISTORIC PRECEDENTS.

Search the writers on the law of nations, and you will find an appeal to the slaves justified. Search history, whether in ancient or modern times, and you will find it justified by examples. In our Revolution the appeal was made by three different British commanders, Lord Dunmore, Sir Henry Clinton, and Lord Cornwallis. I do not stop for details. That this appeal was not unsuccessful is evident from the language of Washington with regard to Dunmore, of whom he did not hesitate to say that if he were not crushed before spring he would be the most formidable enemy the colonies had. "His strength will increase," said Washington, "as a snow-ball by rolling, and faster, if some expedient cannot be hit upon to convince the slaves and servants of the impotency of his designs." That such an APPEAL would be proper is admitted by Jefferson while describing his own individual losses from Cornwallis: "He destroyed all my growing crops and tobacco; he burned all my barns, containing the same articles of last year; having first taken what corn he wanted, he used, *as was to be expected*, all my stock of cattle, sheep and hogs for the sustenance of his army, and carried off all the horses capable of service. *§ He carried off also about thirty slaves.* Had this been to give them freedom, he would have done right. From an estimate made at the time, on the best information I could collect, I suppose the State of Virginia lost under Lord Cornwallis's hands, that year, about thirty thousand slaves." — (*Letter to Dr. Gordon.*) It would be difficult to imagine testimony stronger. Here was a sufferer justly indignant for himself and his State; but he does not doubt that an enemy would do right in carrying off slaves to give them freedom.

APPEAL TO SLAVES UNAVAILING—THEN WHY NOT TRY?

But admitting that an appeal to slaves in support of the Union is constitutional, and also according to the examples of history, it is said that it will be unavailing; for the slaves will not hearken to it. Then why not try? It can do no harm, and it will at least give us a good name. But if we are not beyond learning from the enemy, we shall see that the generals most hated on our side, and, like Adams and Hancock in the Revolution, specially excepted from pardon, are Phelps and Hunter; plainly because the ideas of these generals were more feared than any battery or strategy. Of this be assured. The opponents of an appeal to the slaves are not anxious because it will fail. It is only because it may be successful that they oppose it. They fear that it will reach the slaves, rather than that it will not reach them.

IT WILL TAKE EFFECT AMONG SLAVES—SLAVE TELEGRAPH.

But look at it candidly and you cannot deny that it must produce an effect. It is idle to say that its influence will be bounded by our jurisdiction. When the mill-gates are lifted, all the water above, in its most distant sources, hurries on its way; and so will the slaves. Remote kingdoms trembled at the Pope's excommunication and interdict; and an elegant historian has described the thunders of the Vatican intermingling with the thunders of war. All Christendom shook when Luther nailed his propositions on the church door of Wittemberg. But an appeal to our slaves will be hardly less prevailing. Do you ask how it would be known? The slave telegraph is not as active as ours; but it is hardly less sure. It takes eight days for a dispatch from Fortress Monroe to the Gulf of Mexico. The glad tidings of freedom will travel with the wind, with the air, with the light, and will gradually quicken and inspire the whole mass. Secret societies, already formed among the slaves, will be among the operators. That I do not speak without authority, I ask you to listen to the words of John Adams, taken from his diary, under date of 24th September, 1775:—

“The Georgia delegates give a melancholy account of the States of Georgia and South Carolina. They said if one thousand regular troops should land in Georgia, and their commander be furnished with arms and clothes enough, and proclaim freedom to all the negroes who would join his camp, twenty thousand would join it from the two provinces in a fortnight. The negroes have a wonderful art of communicating intelligence among themselves. It will run several hundreds of miles in a week or fortnight.”
—*Writings of John Adams*, vol. viii. p. 420.

This is testimony. The destructive avalanche of the Alps is sometimes started by the winding of a horn, and a structure so irrational as slavery will tremble at a sound.

SLAVES ENCOURAGED — MASTERS DISCOURAGED.

From such an appeal two things must ensue. First, the slaves will be encouraged in loyalty; and, secondly, the masters will be discouraged in disloyalty. Slave labor, which is the mainspring and nursery of rebel supplies, without which the rebellion must starve, will be disorganized, while a panic spreads among slave-masters absent from their homes. The most audacious rebels will lose their audacity, and instead of hurrying forward to deal parricidal blows at their country, will hurry backward to defend their own firesides. The rebellion will lose its power. It will be hamstrung.

PANIC AMONG MASTERS.

That such a panic would ensue is attested by the confession of the South Carolina delegation in the old Continental Congress, as appears by its *Secret Journal*, under date of 29th March, 1779, that this State was "*unable to make any effective efforts with militia by reason of the great proportion of citizens necessary to remain at home to prevent insurrection among the negroes, and to prevent the desertion of them to the enemy.*" It is attested also by the concurring testimony of southern men in other days; especially in those remarkable words of John Randolph, that the fire-bell of Richmond does not toll at midnight without the mother clasping her infant to the breast, fearful that the slaves had risen. It is attested also by the actual condition of things when John Brown entered Virginia, as pictured in the familiar words:—

He captured Harper's Ferry
With his nineteen men so few,
And he frightened Old Virginny
Till she trembled through and through.

In asserting the efficacy of this appeal, I ground myself on no visionary theories or vain hopes, but on the nature of man and authentic history. To doubt its efficacy is to doubt that man is man, with a constant desire for liberty as for life, and it is also to doubt the unquestionable instances in our own history where this desire has been displayed by African slaves. That a government exposed to the assaults of a merciless barbarian foe should so long reject this irresistible alliance, is among the questions which will excite the astonishment of future ages.

OBJECTIONS TO PROCLAMATION.

Do you ask the reasons alleged against this appeal? They all resolve themselves into objections of fact. The President, by his Proclamation, has already answered them practically; but I will take them up in detail.

BORDER STATES.

(1.) The first objection, and most often repeated, is one which it is diffi-

cult to treat with patience. We are told that such an appeal will offend the Border States, and that, in this moment of trial, we must do as they tell us. It is of course slave-masters who speak for the Border States; and permit me to say, such persons, continuing to swear by slavery, are not competent witnesses with regard to it. Believing in slavery, wedded to slavery, they are as incompetent to testify when it is in question, as husband and wife are incompetent to testify for each other. Just in proportion as we have followed them, thus far we have been misled, and we shall continue to be misled so long as we follow them. Their influence has been perpetual paralysis. Nobody can counsel safely at this moment who adheres to slavery, or who fails to see slavery as the origin and mainspring of the rebellion. It is well known that for a long time in England all the efforts against slavery, led by Wilberforce and Clarkson, were discountenanced and opposed by the slave-masters in the distant islands. Be the proposition what it might, whether to abridge, to mitigate or ameliorate, there was always one steady dissent. Put not your trust in slave-masters; do not hearken to their promises; do not follow their counsels. Such is the plain lesson of English history, of French history, of Dutch history, of every country which has dealt with this question; ay, of Russian history at this very moment; and such also is the positive caution of English statesmen. On this point we have the concurring testimony of three names, each of whom is an authority. It is all embodied in a brief passage of a speech by Lord Brougham.

"I entirely concur in the observation of Mr. Burke, repeated and more happily expressed by Mr. Canning, that the masters of slaves are not to be trusted with making laws upon slavery; that nothing they do is ever found effective; and that if by some miracle they but chance to enact a wholesome regulation, it is always found to want what Mr. Burke calls *the executory principle*; it fails to execute itself."

These are emphatic words; and as often as I am reminded of the opinions of slave-masters on our present duties, when slavery is in question, I think of them as a solemn warning, confirmed by all the teachings of experience, early and late, in our own country.

OFFICERS WILL FLING DOWN ARMS.

(2.) Another objection to this appeal is that officers in our army will fling down their arms. Very well. Let the traitors fling down their arms; the sooner the better. They are unworthy to bear arms, and should be delivered up to the hissing and execration of mankind. But I will not dishonor officers with the commission of the United States by such an imputation on their loyalty or common sense. As officers, they must know their duty too well, and, as intelligent men, they must know that the slaves are calculated to be their best and surest allies.

"SIDE ISSUE."

(3.) Another objection is, that slavery is a "side issue," which must not be touched until the war is ended. But these wise objectors forget that it is precisely in order to end the war that slavery is to be touched, and that when they oppose this effort they make a "side issue" in behalf of slavery, calculated to weaken the national arm.

SLAVE INSURRECTION.

(4.) Another objection has its origin in pity, that the rebels may be saved from a slave insurrection. God forbid that I should fail in any duty of humanity, or tenderness even; but I know no principle of war or of reason by which our rebels should be saved from the natural consequences of their own conduct. When they rose against a paternal government, they set the example of insurrection, which has carried death to so many firesides. They cannot complain if their slaves, with better reason, follow it. It is according to an old law, that bloody inventions return to plague the inventor. But this whole objection proceeds on a mistaken idea of the African slave. The story of St. Domingo, so often quoted against him, testifies to his humanity. It was only when Napoleon, in an evil hour, sought to re-enslave him, that those scenes of blood occurred which exhibit less the cruelty of the slave than the atrocious purposes of the white man. The African is not cruel, vindictive or harsh; but gentle, forgiving, and kind. Such is authentic history. Nor does it appear, when the slaves left their masters, on the appeal of the British commanders, during our Revolution, that they were guilty of any excess. It is true that labor was disorganized, and the whole community weakened; and this is what we seek to accomplish in our rebel States.

SLAVES WILL OVERFLOW NORTH.

(5.) And yet one more objection is sometimes advanced. It is said that an appeal to the slaves will cause them to overflow into the North, where they will compete with other labor. This ill-considered and trivial objection subordinates the suppression of the rebellion to a question of labor, and thus diverts attention by a "side issue" from the great object at heart. But it becomes absurd when you consider, as every candid observer must admit, that no such objection can arise. There is no danger of any such overflow into the North. It is precisely the pressure of slavery, and not the license of freedom, that now causes the overflow that occurs. If slavery were removed, the Africans would flow back instead of overflowing here. The South is their natural home, and there they will go when justice at last prevails.

OBJECTIONS ALL ANSWERED.

Such are the objections of fact, so far as any exist within my knowledge. If any other has been made, I do not know it. I ask you frankly, have I not answered them?

SUCCESS ONLY THROUGH EMANCIPATION.

But, fellow-citizens, I shall not leave the argument at this stage. It is not enough to show that slaves can render us important assistance, by labor, by information, or by arms, and that there is no reasonable objection to calling upon them, with other loyalists, in support of the Union. The case is stronger still. *Without the aid of the slaves this war cannot be ended successfully.* Their alliance is, therefore, a necessity. In making this assertion, I know well the responsibility I assume; nor do I assume it lightly. But the time has come when the truth must be told. Let me be understood. War is proverbially uncertain, and I will not doubt that fortune will again light upon our arms. The force of the rebellion may be broken, even without an appeal to the slaves. But I am sure that with the slaves our victory will be more prompt, while without them it can never be effectual—completely to crush out the rebellion. It is not enough to beat armies. Rebel communities, envenomed against the Union, must be reclaimed, and a wide-spread region must be pacified. This can be done only by the removal of the cause of all this trouble, and the consequent assimilation of the people, so that no man shall call another master. If slavery be regarded as a disease, it must be extirpated by knife and cautery, for only in this way can the healthful operations of national life be restored. If it be regarded as a motive, it must be expelled from the system, that it may no longer exercise its disturbing influence. So long as slavery continues, the States in which it exists will fly madly from the Union; but with the destruction of slavery, they will lose all such motive, and will rather prefer to nestle under its wing. The Slave States, by the influence of slavery, are now *centrifugal*; but with slavery out of the system, these States will be *centripetal*. Such is the present law of their being. And it should be the policy of the government at this time to take advantage of this law, for the benefit of the Union. Nay, from the necessity of the case, this should be done.

FIRE IN THE REAR.

A united people cannot be conquered. Defeated on the battle-field, they will remain sullen and revengeful, ready for another rebellion. This is the lesson of history. Even Hannibal, after crushing in the field all the armies of Rome, and ranging at will throughout Italy, was obliged to confess the inadequacy of his triumphs, and he appealed for help to the subjects of Rome, exciting them to insurrection, and arousing them against the Roman power. To this long-cherished plan were directed all the energies which he could spare from battle; believing that in this way his enemy could be brought under a double fire. From the beginning of our war we have assumed, as an element of strength, the presence in the Slave States of large numbers devoted to the Union, who would be ready at the proper moment to co-operate with the national forces. It is true that the people of the Slave

States are not united, and that among them there are large numbers ready at call to uphold the Union; but most of these faithful Unionists are not white. The Unionists of the South are black. Let these be rallied, and the rebellion will be exposed not only to a fire in front, but also to a fire in the rear. The two together are necessary to the operations of war. The Union army thus far is like a single blade of a pair of scissors, which, though of choicest steel with sharpest edge, must be comparatively useless. Let the other blade be conjoined, and the instrument will be perfect, warranted to cut. The scissors of fate could not cut more surely.

EFFECTIVE FINALITY OF THE WAR.

Is not our duty clear? And is not the President completely vindicated? By Emancipation we not only hasten the war to a close, but we give it that effective *finality* which will prevent it from breaking forth anew, and which can be obtained in no other way. The head of the hydra will be destroyed, and its root exterminated, so that it cannot show itself again. Without Emancipation the whole contest is delivered over to present uncertainty, while the future is left to glare with all the horrors of civil strife unsuppressed. There is a chapter of Don Quixote entitled "A Conclusion in which Nothing is Concluded;" and this will be the proper title for the history of this war if slavery is allowed to endure. If you would trample down the rebellion, you must trample down slavery, and, believe me, it must be completely done. Among the terrible pictures in the immortal poem of Dante, where crime on earth is portrayed in so many fearful punishments, is that of Caiaphas, the high priest of the Jews, who, as a penalty for his sacrifice of the Saviour, was stretched on the floor of hell, where all who passed must tread on him.

Naked athwart the pathway he must lie,
Condemned, as thou perceivest, to undergo
The weight of every one who passes by.

Such should be the final fate of slavery, naked and dishonored, stretched where all may tread upon it. Never could the rights of war be employed more justly than to create this doom.

PROCLAMATION THE HERALD OF PEACE.

It was easy to see, from the beginning, that this rebellion had its origin in slavery; that without slavery it never could have broken forth; that, when begun, it was continued only through slavery; that slavery was at once the curse that maddened, the principle that governed, and the power that sustained; and the oligarchy of slave-masters, three hundred and fifty thousand all told, were the criminals through whom all this direful wickedness was organized and waged. Such is the unquestionable diagnosis of the case, which history will recognize, and which a wise statesmanship

must have seen promptly. Not to see slavery in this guilty character was a mistake, and grievously have we answered for it. All are agreed now that Buchanan played into the hands of the rebellion, when, declaring that there can be no coercion of a State, he refused to touch the rebellion. Alas! alas! We, too, may play into the hands of the rebellion when, out of strange and incomprehensible forbearance, we refuse to touch slavery, which is the very life of the rebellion. Pardon these allusions, which I make in no spirit of criticism, but simply that I may accumulate new motives for that Proclamation, which I rejoice to welcome as the herald of peace.

“GENERAL” EMANCIPATION IS THE BEST GENERAL.

There are many generals already in the field,—upwards of thirty major-generals and two hundred brigadiers; but meritorious and brave as they may be, there is a general better than all, whom the President promises to commission,—I mean General Emancipation.

FORCE ALONE CANNOT CONQUER WITHOUT IDEAS.

It is common to speak of God as on the side of the heavy battalions. Whatever may be the truth of this saying, it does not contain the whole truth. Heavy battalions are something; but they are not everything. Even if they prevail on the battle-field, which is not always the case, the victory which they compel is not final. It is impotent to secure that tranquillity which is essential to national life. Mind is above matter; right is more than force; and it is vain to attempt to conquer merely by matter or by force. If this can be done in small affairs, it cannot in large affairs, for these will yield only to moral influences. Napoleon was the great master of war, and yet, from his utterances at St. Helena, the legacy of his transcendent experience, comes this confession, — “The more I study the world the more am I convinced of the inability of *brute force* to create anything durable.” And another Frenchman, of subtle thought and perfect integrity, whose name is linked forever with American institutions, de Tocqueville, has paid a similar tribute to truth. “Force,” says he, “is never more than a transient element of success. A government which should only be able to crush its enemies on the field of battle would very soon be destroyed.” Surely, in these authoritative words of the warrior and the thinker, there is a warning to us not to put trust in batteries or bayonets, while an unconquerable instinct makes us all confess that might does not constitute right.

Let the war end on the battle-field alone, and it will be only in appearance that it will end, not in reality. Time will be gained for new efforts, and slavery will coil itself to spring again. The rebellion may seem to be vanquished, and yet it will triumph. The Union may seem to conquer, and yet it will succumb. The republic may seem to be saved, and yet it

will be lost,—handed over a prey to that injustice which, so long as it exists, must challenge the judgments of a righteous God.

PEACE THROUGH FREEDOM.

Thus, for the sake of peace, which we all desire, do I now plead for freedom, through which alone peace can be secured. Are you earnest for peace, then must you be earnest for freedom also. Would you uphold the Union against treason, then must you uphold freedom, without which bloody treason will flourish over us. But freedom has been adopted by Congress and proclaimed by the President as one of the agencies in the prosecution of the war. Therefore, it must be maintained with all our souls and all our hearts and all our minds. The hour of debate has passed; the hour of duty has sounded. In opposing solemn acts of Congress, which, according to the Constitution, are now the supreme law of the land, passed for the national defence; in opposing the Proclamation of the President; nay, in discouraging freedom, you are as bad as if you discouraged enlistments. It is through freedom, as well as the arms of our soldiers, that the war will be waged; and the same loyalty which supports the one is now due to the other. The discouragement of enlistments is recognized as seditious and traitorous; but the discouragement of this other force, adopted by the government for the suppression of the rebellion, is only another form of sedition and treason, which an indignant patriotism will spurn. Emancipation is now a war measure, and it must be sustained as you sustain an army in the field.

“LET MY PEOPLE GO.”

If the instincts of patriotism did not prompt this support, I should find a sufficient motive in that duty which we all owe to the Supreme Ruler, God Almighty, whose visitations upon our country are now so fearful. Not rashly would I make myself the interpreter of his will; and yet I am not blind. According to a venerable maxim of jurisprudence, Whoso would have equity must do equity; and God plainly requires equity at our hands. We cannot expect success while we set at naught this requirement, proclaimed in his divine character, in the dictates of reason and in the examples of history; proclaimed, also, in all the events of this protracted war. Great judgments have fallen upon the country; plagues have been let loose; rivers have been turned into blood, and there is a great cry throughout the land, for there is not a house where there is not one dead; and at each judgment we seem to hear that terrible voice which sounded in the ears of Pharaoh,—“Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.” I know not how others are touched; but I cannot listen to the frequent tidings of calamity to our arms, of a noble soldier lost to his country, of a bereavement in a

family, of a youthful son brought home dead to his mother, without catching the warning, "Let my people go." Nay, every wound, every sorrow, every hardship, — all that we are compelled to bear in taxation, in want, in derangement of business, has a voice saying, "Let my people go."

WAR CHANGED IN CHARACTER, NOT IN OBJECT.

And now, thank God, the word has been spoken; a greater word was never spoken. Emancipation has begun, and our country is already elevated and glorified. The war in which we are now engaged has not changed in *object*, but it has changed in *character*. Its object now, as at the beginning, is simply to put down the rebellion; but its character is derived from the new force at last enlisted, which must not only stamp itself upon all that is done, but absorb the whole war to itself, even as the rod of Aaron swallowed up all other rods. Vain will it be again to delude European nations into the foolish belief that slavery has nothing to do with the war; that it is a war for empire on one side, and independence on the other; and that all generous ideas are on the side of the rebellion. And vain also will be that other European cry, whether from an intemperate press or the cautious lips of statesmen, that separation is inevitable, and that our government is doomed to witness the dismemberment of the Republic. With this new alliance, all such forebodings will be falsified; the wishes of the fathers will be fulfilled, and those rights of human nature, which were the declared object of our Revolution, will be vindicated. Thus inspired, the sword of Washington — that sword which, according to his last will and testament, was to be drawn only in self-defence, or in defence of country and its rights — will once more marshal our armies of victory, while our flag, wherever it floats, will give freedom to all beneath its folds, and its proud inscription will be at last triumphantly verified, "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable."

WAR FOR ALL MANKIND.

But, fellow-citizens, the war which we wage is not merely for ourselves; it is for all mankind. Slavery yet lingers in Brazil, and beneath the Spanish flag in those two golden possessions, Cuba and Porto Rico; but nowhere can it survive its extinction here. Therefore, we conquer for liberty everywhere. In ending slavery here we open its gates all over the world, and let the oppressed go free. Nor is this all. In saving the Republic we shall save civilization. Man throughout his long pilgrimage on earth has been compelled to suffer much; but slavery is the heaviest burden which he has been called to bear; it is the only burden which our country has been called to bear. Let it drop, and our happy country, with humanity in its train, all changed in raiment and in countenance, like the Christian Pilgrim, will hurry upward to the celestial gate. If thus far our example has

failed, it is simply because of slavery. It was vain to proclaim our unparalleled prosperity, the comfort diffused among a numerous people, resources without stint, or even the education of our children; the enemies of the Republic simply said, "There is slavery," and our example became powerless. But let slavery disappear, and the same example will be of irresistible might. Without firing a gun or writing a dispatch, it will revolutionize the world.

Therefore the battle which we now fight belongs to the grandest events of history. It constitutes one of those epochs from which humanity will date. It is one of the battles of the ages; as when the millions of Persia were hurled back from Greece, or when the Mahomedans, victors in Africa and Spain, were hurled back from France by Charles Martel, and Western Europe was saved to Christianity. In such a cause no effort can be too great, no faith can be too determined. To die for country is pleasant and honorable. But all who die for country now, die also for humanity. Wherever they lie, in bloody fields, they will be remembered as the heroes through whom the Republic was saved and civilization established forever.

But there are duties elsewhere than in bloody conflict. Each of us in his place at home, by his best efforts, can do something, not only to sustain the soldier in the field, but also to sustain that sublime edict, which will be to the soldier both sword and buckler, while it gives to the conflict all the grandeur of a great idea. In this hour of trial let none of us fail. Above all, let none of us go over to the enemy, even should his tents for a moment be pitched in Faneuil Hall; and do not forget that there can be but two parties, the party of the country, with the President for its head, and with Emancipation for its glorious watchword; and the party of the rebellion, with Jefferson Davis for its head, and no other watchword than Slavery.



